

PROCESSING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 ⁵²_{a1} This application claims the benefit of United States Provisional
Application Serial No. _____ entitled "PROCESSING MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION" filed on May 7, 1999, which is incorporated herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 ⁵²_{a2} Reputable authorities have documented industry's difficulty with
successfully implementing either strategic plans or initiatives (e.g.,
reengineering: 2/3 fail; mergers: 57% fall short; IT projects: only 34% are
implemented and take twice as long and twice as much money as
projected). In addition, common frustrations of business executives
15 around today's rapid rate of change can be paraphrased as follows:

20 "There's so much going on I can't get my arms around
what it all means for improving the way we do business,
and when I get close to a really important strategic
initiative, particularly one affecting multiple aspects of the
enterprise, it's usually in trouble."

As a result of today's shortening business cycles and global, dispersed
organizations, a key competitive issue is how quickly an organization
can successfully realign its people around initiatives to change the
25 organization's business model or react to unforeseen circumstances or
opportunities. Existing strategic planning and project management

practices, which are actually or effectively separate processes, do not work quickly or effectively enough for a rapidly changing competitive environment:

- Initiatives are proliferating in virtually every organization at an increasing rate due to technology shifts and, at any one time, are difficult to visualize or interpret strategically.
- Local initiatives are often designed without a clear connection to overall corporate strategic goals and priorities, or with each other, so efforts can end up being at cross purposes or poorly coordinated.
- Strategic thinking is not prevalent in the design of many initiatives which thus tend to perpetuate current practices more than find new ways to grow and prosper.
- Existing management practices are often too informal and undisciplined to stay focused on key priorities or to keep abreast of changing circumstances.
- Projects tend to be managed individually without strategic context so people working on teams do not understand how their actions contribute to the business.
- Managers spend too much time administratively keeping "all the balls in the air" and too little time working proactively on substantive issues driving the business.

As a consequence of these problems, organizations find it more and more difficult to meet basic business expectations or to get crucial change initiatives accomplished. Organizations have difficulty translating outside events or new ideas into strategic plans and initiatives that get implemented. Today management needs a quick, cohesive general management process and tools designed for agility in the 21st century. There are examples of agility and high performance; in fact organizations across different industries have been held out as singularly successful and numerous studies have identified specific aspects - leadership, culture, customer relations, quality - that correlate with high growth and results.

The Web and Internet technology allow far-flung people to be linked and share information as never before, fostering new alliances and revolutionizing business. However, the tools developed so far are primarily intended to enable people to communicate at the individual and team level.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A single cohesive framework can be provided that embodies key elements for being agile (e.g. organizational development, leadership, project management, strategic planning) and that uses the Internet to make these elements readily available. Tools can be provided that help people understand business goals holistically and work in an integrated

and agile way across the organization to accomplish common or shared goals. A common framework can be provided for communicating effectively across diverse groups. A common framework can be provided for assessing key elements of the business. The framework can also be used to access external sources of knowledge, expertise and tools.

As used herein, "organization of people" refers to any group of people, businesses, or other entities that are associated for one or more purposes. Typical organizations of people include a business, an industry group, a professional organization, a large corporation, a partnership, a customer allied with a supplier, a university, a division of a company, a government agency, and a political organization. As used herein, "management concept" refers to any product of a thought process by a person or other entity that is charged with a responsibility. Typical management concepts include goals, objectives, initiatives, ideas, plans, strategies, expectations, assessments, and targets. As used herein, "pointer" refers to any reference used to direct the attention of a person, computer program, or other entity. Typical pointers include hypertext links, pull-down menus, index entries, and textual directions.

In one aspect, the invention features a method for use in processing management information. The method includes acquiring a first set of computer data representing a model of an organization of people, the

model having fundamental components, the first set of computer data including data items representing the fundamental components; associating the first set of computer data with a second set of computer data representing a portfolio of management concepts; and issuing a report of management concepts based on the second set of computer data, the report being sorted by fundamental component.

In another aspect, the invention features a method for use in processing management information for managing a customer relationship. The method includes acquiring a first set of computer data representing a model of the customer relationship, the model having fundamental components, the first set of computer data including data items representing the fundamental components; associating the first set of computer data with a second set of computer data representing a portfolio of management concepts; and issuing a customer management report of management concepts based on the second set of computer data, the customer management report being sorted by fundamental component.

Implementations of this or another aspect of the invention may include one or more of the following features. The fundamental components may include a customer component and at least one of the data items may represent the customer component and may include customer information for the customer relationship. The customer information

may include a description of a customer segment, a customer product, or a customer service. The fundamental components may include a process component and at least one of the data items may represent the process component and may include process information for the customer relationship. The process information may describe a process to be executed by at least one person to advance the customer relationship, a process that includes identifying a customer need, a process that includes identifying an entity that is important to the customer relationship, a process that includes identifying a possible solution for a customer in the customer relationship, a process that includes identifying a benefit to a customer in the customer relationship, a process that includes striving to achieve sole source status with a customer in the customer relationship, a process that includes striving to achieve a customer confidant status with a customer in the customer relationship, or a process that includes striving to outperform a competitor in the customer relationship. The fundamental components may include a capabilities component and at least one of the data items may represents the capabilities component and may include capabilities information for the customer relationship. The capabilities information may describe a capability that is needed for meeting a client requirement, a capability that includes geographic coverage, a capability that includes a technical skill, a capability that includes providing a helpful partner, a capability that includes a relationship management skill, or a technology that is important to a customer. The fundamental

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components may include an economics component and at least one of the data items may represent the economics component and may include economics information for the customer relationship. The economics information may include a description of an economic potential of the customer relationship, a description of a profit and loss aspect of the customer relationship, or a description of an investments aspect of the customer relationship.

In another aspect, the invention features a method for use in processing management information for managing a program management office. The method includes acquiring a first set of computer data representing a model of the program management office, the model having fundamental components, the first set of computer data including data items representing the fundamental components; associating the first set of computer data with a second set of computer data representing a portfolio of management concepts; and issuing a program management report of management concepts based on the second set of computer data, the program management report being sorted by fundamental component.

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9/27/00 > Implementations of this or another aspect of the invention may include one or more of the following features. The fundamental components may include a customer component and at least one of the data items may represent the customer component and may include customer

as information for the program management office. The customer information may includes a description of an internal customer, an external customer, a product, or a service. The fundamental components may include a process component and at least one of the data items may represent the process component and may include process information for the program management office. The process information may describe a process to be executed by at least one person to help meet a commitment to a customer, a process that includes identifying a customer need, a process that includes identifying an entity that is important, a prioritization process, a system delivery process, a process that includes an evaluation process, a process that includes a project management process, a process that includes performing a cost/benefit analysis, a process that includes an accountability process, a process that includes providing metrics, a process that includes providing reporting, a process that includes providing risk management, a process that includes a staffing process, a process that includes a training process, or a process that includes a decision making process. The fundamental components may include a capabilities component and at least one of the data items may represent the capabilities component and may include capabilities information for the program management office. The capabilities information may describe a capability that is needed for meeting a client requirement, a capability that includes business unit coverage, a capability that includes a technical skill, a capability that includes providing a helpful partner, a capability that includes a project

management skill, or a capability that includes a technology that is important to a customer. The fundamental components may include an economics component and at least one of the data items may represent the economics component and may include economics information for the project management office. The economics information may include a description of expenses or a description of revenue.

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In another aspect, the invention features a method for use in processing management information for managing a scalable process. The method includes acquiring a first set of computer data representing a model of the scalable, the model having fundamental components, the first set of computer data including data items representing the fundamental components; associating the first set of computer data with a second set of computer data representing a portfolio of management concepts; and issuing a scalable process report of management concepts based on the second set of computer data, the scalable process report being sorted by fundamental component.

Implementations of this or another aspect of the invention may include one or more of the following features. The fundamental components may include a customer component and at least one of the data items may represent the customer component and may include customer information for the customer relationship. The customer information includes a description of a customer segment, a description of a

customer product, or a description of a customer service. The fundamental components may include a process component and at least one of the data items may represent the process component and may include process information for the scalable process. The process information may describes a process to be executed by at least one person to deliver a consistent quality customer service, a process that includes identifying a customer need, a process that includes identifying an economic factor, a process that includes developing a scenario, a process that includes evaluating a competitor, a process that includes identifying a trend, a process that includes pilot testing an option, a process that includes managing an expectation, a process that includes assessing a system need, a process that includes assessing an organizational need, a process that includes assessing a management practice, a process that includes suggesting an improvement, a process that includes developing a change management process, a process that includes selling a customer on a change, a process that includes developing an action plan, or a process that includes maintaining a relationship. The fundamental components may include a capabilities component and at least one of the data items may represent the capabilities component and may include capabilities information for the scalable process. The capabilities information may describe a capability that is needed for meeting a client requirement, a capability that includes geographic coverage, a capability that includes a technical skill, a capability that includes providing a helpful partner, or a capability

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that includes a customer management skill. The fundamental components may include an economics component and at least one of the data items may represent the economics component and may include economics information for the scalable process. The economics information may include a description of a profit and loss aspect of the scalable process or a description of an investments aspect of the scalable process.

Other features and advantages will become apparent from the following description, including the drawings, and from the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1-2 and 4 are block diagrams of software systems.

Figs. 3, 6-10, and 12-41 are illustrations of computer display screens produced by the software systems.

Fig. 5 is an illustration of principles underlying the software systems.

Fig. 11 is a spider diagram produced by the software systems.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The Agile Management Portal program includes Intranet/Internet based software integrated in a process to help organizations such as companies, enterprises, and businesses, to be more agile. The program allows management teams, wherever located, to quickly plan, design, and work on a common portfolio of strategic goals and initiatives the

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teams believe will make the business grow and prosper, and to gain access to prepopulated external sources of knowledge, expertise and tools via the Internet.

53r 06 / Agility management: In at least some circumstances, Agility means being able to consistently grow and perform better than competitors in the marketplace over time, and Agility management means linking strategic planning, project management, and high performance organizational principles into an integrated set of management tools, templates and services that enable organizations to be more agile.

The Agile Manager can serve as a "management portal" through which people can view both internal organizational goals and external information available to help achieve these goals. The Portal's functional architecture is called The Agile Manager, and has three modules, the Agile Manager, the Agile Company, the Agile Baseline, and Agile Know-how, that can be used in a planning and management process:

The Agile Manager includes:

- (1) a business domain structure to which strategic goals and contributing initiatives can be linked. This structure creates a stem-to-stern view of how the business works, including customer, value chain, organization and economic domains. This structure allows the user to enter and subsequently explore strategic goals and initiatives germane to

either the organization as a whole or to a particular domain. Once the user picks an area of interest, the user is effectively "one click" away from several context sensitive views about investments the organization is making to grow and improve performance.

5 (2) a gap analysis facility that a management team can use to assess performance gaps and to design how any aspect of the domain structure would have to change to close these gaps.

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10 (3) the ability to create a portfolio of strategic goals and their contributing initiatives using either top down brainstorming or bottom-up association techniques. As a result, teams can effectively start with a clean sheet of paper and reinvent the business from scratch. Or the teams can review an inventory of already on-going activities and relate these activities to each other and to overall strategic goals. Having this portfolio available on-line - subject to permissioning controls - for all to
15 see, keeps members of the organization aware of where they need to go, what it will take to get there, and what actions should be taken to stay on track.

20 (4) a facility to draw people's attention immediately to changes in the portfolio and its contents that are important to the people in view of their particular roles or interests. This facility gives various common and individualized views of different goals and initiatives that will help diverse groups of people to work together effectively. A history of these changes and related dates is also maintained.

(5) a common attribute structure that provides information (e.g., costs, payback, priority, risks, due dates) for any goal and contributing initiative so the goals and initiatives can be sorted against a piece of information to facilitate ongoing decision making. For example, if resources are limited, the user can sort initiatives by cost, payback, and priority, or if the user wants to see how the portfolio will affect any part of the organization, the user can sort by domain.

(6) the ability to follow a context sensitive link to any goal or initiative and its relevant internal and external sources of knowledge deemed helpful to successful implementation.

~~(7) a management action plan/agenda utility that managers can use to keep track of pending issues and actions for each strategic goal or initiative. As a result, users can learn about outstanding issues, upcoming agenda items, and the responsible parties. As a result, items are easily found and a user is allowed to see progress related issues before meetings so that management meetings are focused on substantive issues more time effectively.~~

The Agile Company:

(8) The Agile Manager also supports the Agile Company program, which includes content that executives can use to assess how well their organization matches high performance criteria and to suggest base-case template programs that can be adapted to accelerate developing agility. Behind the Agile Company is content reflecting 20 traits and

characteristics that capture fundamental principles underlying agile, high performing organizations

The Agile Baseline:

- 5 (9) The Agile Baseline includes an accessible assessment tool that displays performance criteria that respondents then evaluate in terms of their organization's competency relative to each criterion. The result of this input is displayed as a "spider" diagram that visually helps to convey the extent of any gaps that should be closed to improve
- 10 competitiveness. The spider diagram helps people focus on opportunities for improvement and makes the rationale for change readily accessible to members of the organization.

Agile Know-how

- 15 (10) Agile Know-how includes a subscription service that provides links to specific knowledge sources and tools that can be helpful to people working on different initiatives. This subscription service fits together with the Agile Manager so the knowledge is accessible in the context in which it is needed.

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When the Agile Manager and its modules are used in conjunction with the Agility Management Process, people are better able to work together in a way demonstrated to be correlated with high performance:

- **Fosters a more adaptive culture (e.g., to relish change and fight inertia):** linking goals, projects and their attributes and being able to sort the portfolio to focus on a particular aspect facilitates adapting to changes when they occur

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- **Helps align users behind strategic goals and contributing projects:** getting users to "see" in simple outline form where the organization wants to go to grow and prosper, and what it's going to take to get there, which enables users to understand the strategy and to keep their own projects in alignment

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- **Helps employees act and be treated like owners:** when people can see a model of the organization and understand how it works they are better able to make decisions about what is important, much as if they owned the organization

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- **Helps makes decisions based on benefits and risks to the business:** linking proposed initiatives to the model of the organization, and to costs, paybacks, and priorities makes it easier to understand the benefits and risks that could result.

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- **Provides well managed structure that encourages teamwork across boundaries:** the ability to understand and be informed of changes elsewhere in the organization enhances the ability to work across different disciplines and locations

- **Encourages people to continuously look for ways to improve the business:** enabling management team members to review a table of contents of their business, and to assess gaps between

how good they need to be and where they are currently, and to set goals for closing these gaps; this ability of individuals or teams to step back and to "see" the table of contents and to reflect on what changes need to be made to different in the marketplace and to improve performance is a key ingredient in creating a culture that continually looks for ways to improve the business

- **Helps people understand better how the pieces of the business work together:** the model of the business gives viewers an integrated view of how the business works and how they relate, which provides a valuable context for understanding why something that does not entirely make sense locally could be proper for the business as a whole
- **Keeps users focused on successfully implementing strategic priorities:** The ability to constantly view and be aware of what is in the approved strategic goals and initiatives portfolio keeps members of the organization aligned around common strategic priorities
- **Makes the management process more cost effective by having information and knowledge available when it is needed:** the linking of plans, goals, resources, people and projects into a relational database accessible via the Internet makes valuable information available almost immediately

The computing environment

5/10 To use Agility Manager effectively, an organization may use an intranet with widespread email and Web browser usage. Agility Manager is compatible with modern email systems and with Microsoft and

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Netscape Web browsers. Typically, no other client-side software is required.

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Agility Manager combines sophisticated application code with powerful, industry standard server components. The Agility Manager server includes a database server, a Web application server, and application code written in server-side Java. Agility Manager can use a Microsoft or Oracle database server. For example, Agility Manager may be run on an IBM Websphere application server, or may run on other Java-based application servers. The Agility Manager may run on Windows NT or Solaris or other operating environments.

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Agility Manager may be installed on an internal server, or may be hosted on a server such as a Web server and connected via Internet or Virtual Private Net.

Example of an on-site installation:

Browsers: MS Internet Explorer 3+, Netscape

Navigator/Communicator 3+

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Mailers: Email client with click-through URL linking, such as Notes, Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Communicator.

Server OS: Windows NT 4

Solaris 2.5+

5 **Database Server:** MS SQL 6.5

Oracle 8

Database administration capability is typically required.

Application Server: IBM WebSphere 1.1 or 2.0

10 **Web Server:** MS IIS, Apache, or Netscape

Mail System: SMTP compatible, such as Notes, Exchange, Sendmail, Smail, Postoffice.

Example of an off-site installation:

Browsers: MS Internet Explorer 3+, Netscape

15 Navigator/Communicator 3+

Mailers: Email client with click-through URL linking, such as Notes, Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Communicator.

Integration and source code

20 The Agile Manager is based on a relational data model.

Screen Map for Agile Manager

Fig. 1 is a map of the basic structure of the suite of software that shows

key functions performed by the Agile Manager and ways in which users can get access to other modules of the suite. The sequence of the map illustrates logical paths users take as different aspects of the goal hierarchy are considered, from deciding what belongs and why, designing and modifying goals and contributing projects, monitoring and pursuing issues related to implementation progress, and getting to specific knowledge found helpful to the context of any particular initiative. A screen by screen description is provided below.

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a4 > **Overview of Corporate Processes Affected by the Agility Management Program**

15 The Agility Management Program helps leaders, managers, and staff conduct normal management practices in everyday corporate life quickly using the power of the Internet and effectively by being able to gain access to knowledge needed to make decisions. Thus, the program helps leaders and managers to both execute daily operations successfully and to continually improve the way they do business to keep abreast of changing competitive conditions and to deliver increasing value to their customers and owners.

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a1/2 > **The Planning/Execution Cycle (Process)**

Technology is transforming virtually every aspect of commerce, and globalization and deregulation are making competition more complex. These forces are causing organizations to go through planning and

execution cycles to launch multiple new initiatives to cope. To do this, organizations routinely make assessments of their performance – they consider best practices, they survey customer opinions, they examine market and competitive trends and practices; they create task forces and hire consultants who generate findings and conclusions. To handle these conclusions, organizations conduct planning to establish goals and design initiatives to improve their performance – they hold retreats to develop these visions, they decide on priorities and allocate resources to fund initiatives to bring these visions to fruition. To execute these initiatives, organizations assign staff and hire outside expertise and know-how to get the results they want. To get the results to stick, organizations undertake change management programs to bring people and organizational behaviors into line with what the new initiatives require.

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The Agility Management Program enables people to get organized and communicate as they go through these planning and execution cycles much easier and faster because of the enabling software, and to gain access to knowledge and tools that will help them understand how to implement their initiatives more successfully. Fig. 2 illustrates the relationship between the Agile Manager and common planning practices.

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Managing a Portfolio of Initiatives

The planning/execution process is repeated again and again across organizations in different departments, functional areas, and lines of business. It is not uncommon for literally hundreds of initiatives to be underway in units across an organization. Some of the initiatives are local initiatives to improve a specific operation and typically do not need to be coordinated with other initiatives. Many initiatives, however, have multiple components that should be coordinated so that they contribute to the accomplishment of a single overarching goal. For instance, a new product requires that processes across the organization from sales and marketing, to operations and manufacturing, and technology as well as human resources be integrated and aligned so that the product will be introduced in time to exploit an opportunity in the marketplace. Similarly, introduction of new technology, such as a new workstation, often requires coordination of units from information technology, sales and marketing, human resource training, and administration before the new technology can be put into beneficial use.

The Agile Manager not only facilitates the planning/execution cycle for any particular goal or initiative, but also allows the user to put all the priority goals and the priority goal's contributing initiatives into a strategic implementation portfolio or hierarchy (Fig 3.).

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Overview of How the Software Integrates with a Process in the Agility Management Program

As shown in Fig. 5, the Agility Management Program reflects principles of effective management of high performing organizations.

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The following describes a typical sequence of how a management user/team might use the Agile Manager. The particular example is drawn from an actual implementation of the Agile Manager linking strategic corporate goals and Information Technology initiatives. The Agile Manager structure allows many different business applications, and a key problem it helps solve is bridging a communication gap between business users and their technical counterparts so both sides work off the same page.

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Planning:

The first sequence, for planning, starts with users viewing their domain structure (Fig. 6) and deciding where they want to set a new goal (see Fig. 7). Users can view the domain structure at different levels of depth from the highest level (shown in Fig. 6) to lower levels showing sub-components within each domain (see Fig. 8). If they wish, users can display already existing goals (see Fig. 9), which helps them to understand what's in the current hierarchy, which can help address issues such as whether particular domains are sufficiently active and whether some existing goals may no longer be appropriate.

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Once users have reviewed current activity and debated where the company needs to devote attention to improve future performance, they can select any domain and select an Agile Baseline Mode ("Baseline"). Baseline allows users to critique the selected domain in terms of criteria that The Agile Manager suggests (see Fig. 10), or that they provide or modify themselves. Once the users have agreed on the criteria and reached consensus about both how good the criteria need to be and how good the criteria currently are, the results are displayed in a spider diagram (see Fig. 11). The spider diagram helps to capture the users' assessment of the current situation and to explain why the domain has been selected for developing new goals to be included in the hierarchy. Subsequently, users can return to Baseline to reassess whether improvement goals and projects that have been undertaken have in fact been successful. This reassessment can suggest new gap areas where new initiatives may be appropriate, or indicate that not enough has been accomplished to sufficiently improve the situation.

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a7 > After exercising Baseline, users may establish a new goal (by a "new goal" button on the domain screens) (see Fig. 7) to improve performance. Once established, the new goal takes its place in the goal hierarchy and management can decide what should happen next.

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a8 > For example, even if a goal "expand business with the most profitable customers" has been entered, ideas related to the goal have not been

entirely fleshed out, resources have not been allocated, plans have not been formulated, and accountability has not been assigned. The goal is without projects necessary to bring about the desired results. To begin to put these projects together, users can use the gap analysis feature to view each domain and sub-domain in terms of how each domain or sub-domain would have to change if the goal is to be achieved. As users identify these changes, they create in effect a vision of a different company that would achieve the goal (see Fig. 12). In this example, two projects or goals to expand business with profitable customers are: to design relationships with high net worth clients, and to have profitable products for every segment. Each of these two projects or goals may also in turn be analyzed in the gap analysis process to create other projects or goals that will make them a reality.

15 ^{Sub} 619 > As these projects or goals are defined, they are added to the Goals Hierarchy (see Fig. 3) that provides access to the strategic hierarchy of goals and contributing projects or goals that the company is working on to improve performance. If the user wants to get more information about the new goal or any goal listed in the hierarchy, the user clicks on the goal of interest to get to summary information as shown in Fig. 13.

In summary, the planning sequence allows the user to update company plans either by starting with a clean sheet of paper and brainstorming a new goal and the projects that would bring it about, or by reviewing the

existing hierarchy of goals and projects and deciding whether something is missing. Thus, the hierarchy typically includes a combination of new ideas being considered and maturing goals and projects that are in the process of implementation.

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Managing the Hierarchy:

The Agile Manager allows managers to keep the hierarchy of goals and contributing goals in constant view and up-to-date with changing circumstances. The hierarchy can be viewed as a totality of goals and contributing goals affecting the enterprise (see Fig. 3), or can be viewed by top goals (see Fig. 14), depending on the user's interest, or by specific top goal (see Fig. 15).

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In addition, the user can view the hierarchy against certain types of information that help inform the user about the impact of goals on the business domains (see Fig. 16) or the priority (see Fig. 17) or impact of each of the goals, or about its status, stage of development, or ownership accountability (see Fig. 18). Because these different views are a click away, the Agile Manager supports a dynamic decision making process where discussion can move quickly from strategic to tactical considerations. For example, if the topic is budgets, the user can sort by goal or project cost (see Fig. 19), or by priority or return on investment ("payback") (see Fig. 20) and can be provided with information that can help the user decide where to commit resources based on factors such as

benefit and risk. In another example, when managers meet and want to focus on key implementation issues, they can opt to switch to viewing "status" factors and can view goals or projects by status (e.g., on track or in need of attention) (see Fig. 18), which stage each is in (see Fig. 21), risks, or who is responsible. Without the Agile Manager, each view would likely require a special study or report; the Agile Manager makes these different views available at a moment's notice. In addition, managers who want to explore any goal or project in more detail can click on the goal or project of interest and get more information. Similarly, managers who see something missing while reviewing the overall hierarchy can select "new goal" from the menu and enter a new goal or project (see Fig. 22).

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In at least some embodiments, an especially important view managers can use to manage the hierarchy is a view in which the goals and projects are sorted by domain. This view can be produced for any of a number of levels, e.g., for the entire hierarchy (see Fig. 16) or for a selected goal in isolation (see Fig. 23). A purpose of this view is to allow managers to understand quickly what initiatives are underway or will affect an aspect of the business. For instance, if a question arises regarding what is being done about market trends, managers can click on any topic on the domain structure (e.g. customer relationships) (see Fig. 24) and see immediately what initiatives are underway related to this topic (see Fig. 25). Users can also execute searches by name or

word in the title of a goal or project (see Fig. 26), and can put Alerts in place (see Fig. 27) that will flag changes that occur in goals or projects previously indicated as being of particular interest (see Fig. 28).

5 ^{5/22} Executing Goals and Projects:

A major purpose of the Agile Manager, in addition to planning and managing the overall portfolio of goals and projects (i.e., the hierarchy), is to help managers accelerate implementation progress related to a goal and its contributing projects. A user has an array of choices to view when reviewing the progress of a selected goal. (The choices available depend on the permission that is granted by the Owner of a Goal to different types of users (see Fig. 29)).

15 ^{5/22} A "summary" page (see Fig. 13) contains information about the goal itself that can be edited (see Fig. 30). Other main views for helping to manage include "progress" (see Fig. 31) that displays the contributing projects or goals that must be finished or achieved before the parent goal can be fully accomplished. The "progress" view allows managers to view progress for the contributing projects side-by-side to determine whether the projects are properly synchronized or are out of phase with each other.

20 ^{5/22} Other features are useful for managers and teams executing goals and contributing projects. A "discussion" feature (see Fig. 32) allows a user

on the system to communicate directly about, and in the context of, the goal or project of interest. The owner of a goal can also select a particularly important part of the discussion and put it on an agenda (see Fig. 33). Another useful feature includes an ability to link to internal and external sources of information that goal or project teams believe are important to make accessible to users involved (see Figs. 34 and 35). The links provide a practical application of knowledge management because the links allow teams to place information effectively or actually one click away so users can get at the information without excessively disturbing the state of the software. For example, users can hot-link to and open a detailed Microsoft Project plan if the plan is useful to the discussions. Users can place Word documents related to the goal where the documents can be found, and open the documents when needed. Similarly, users can link to Web sites of outside consultants or suppliers that may be related to the goal at hand. In this way, users can start using the software through the domain structure, find out the relevant issues, and access relevant knowledge context sensitively along the way.

The above sections have laid out a description of Agile Manager and the Agile Baseline module. In addition, the Agile Manager includes the Agile Company and Agile Know-How modules.

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Agile Know-How links users to excerpts of publications about topics relevant to the goals and projects in which they're involved. For instance, the user can stipulate concepts, such as leadership, and specific aspects of the concept, such as senior leadership, and the kind of information needed, such as understanding the concepts, or how to be a good leader, and then get excerpts that match the needed information. In this regard, the Agile Manager enables an organization to use the Agile Manager as a single source for not only information about strategic initiatives but also knowledge available inside and outside the organization that can help make the organization more agile.

The input screen and process flows include:

Goal Hierarchy Screen: this is the default screen (see Fig. 3) and an important navigational screen for accessing details about any single goal or initiative, or accessing various views. Once the goals and contributing projects have been loaded, the default screen presents a goal hierarchy and can be used as follows:

- **Hierarchy:** the left side of the screen presents an outline the top section of which represents the organization's strategic implementation plan, i.e., in which the top level statements represent strategic goals that are the highest level organization goals, and the next indented level statements represent contributing initiatives that are indicated as having to be completed for the strategic goals to be achieved. A user authorized to see the portfolio view can see where the organization wants to go and what it will take to get there, with the goals and projects associated together in one spot.
- **Unassociated Goals:** the goals and initiatives under this heading are indicated as being either no longer relevant strategically or not yet placed in the hierarchy.

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Functions from this screen: If a user is unhappy with the placement of a goal or initiative or wants to adjust attributes of the goal or initiative, the user has only to click on a goal or initiative listed to retrieve its related information. For example, a click on the initiative takes the user to a **summary screen** (see Fig.

~~13) for this initiative.~~ The following information fields are available for any goal or initiative:

- **Heading:** the entry shows the name of the goal or initiative for which basic information is displayed on this screen.
- 5 • **Owner:** this entry lists the name of the person responsible for implementation of the goal or initiative and authorized to edit its related information.
- **Parent Goal:** this entry lists the name of the goal or initiative immediately above or superior to the initiative that is active. An
10 advantage of showing the parent goal is that a user working on the initiative is instructed that the initiative is contributing to the parent goal.
- **Objective:** this entry shows the objective of the initiative so a user is instructed as to what the initiative is specifically to
15 accomplish.
- **History:** the entry maintains a running log of changes made to the initiative, and indicated by whom and when. Here is recorded when the project was created and when delegated to the current owner. The changes are monitored by the computer so
20 that the user can identify which changes the user wants to have flagged automatically when they are made (see View Alerts below).
- **Status:** this entry identifies the category such as "on-time," chosen to summarize the status of the goal or initiative's progress

so that the user can determine at a glance whether the goal or initiative is in need of attention. The categories listed here can be modified to fit each client situation when an edit mode is selected.

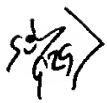
- 5 • **Due Date:** this entry indicates the date by which the initiative is to be achieved.
- ~~act~~ **Priority:** the benefit entry presents a numerical score from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) based on user judgement about the relative value of the initiative or goal in terms of improving the business results. For example, the goal may be rated 3 of 5, i.e., average. An advantage of a simple rating is that users can quickly understand the rating scale and then discuss specifically the reasons behind the rating.
- 10
- 15 • **Risk:** this field presents a 1 to 5 numerical score that indicates a risk level for the goal or initiative, such as that the team is new, that the technology is untested, or that the market is new. By keeping track of risk, managers can work proactively to reduce risk and thus increase the probability of a successful implementation. In addition, when there are resource constraints,
- 20 decisions about which initiatives to continue to pursue may depend on a combination of benefit scores and risk scores to indicate how much managers can count on achieving the initiative and having a positive impact on the business. For example, with a priority score of 3 that is lower than a risk score of 4, a question

might be raised about whether to continue to fund the initiative if there are other initiatives that have better benefit/risk characteristics.



Project Code: this field allows an alpha-numeric identifier to be assigned for administrative purposes.

- **Stage:** the stage field shows where in the project life cycle the goal or initiative is so that a user can keep track of how the goal or initiative is progressing and what remains to be done. For example, the initiative shown is in the "start up" stage. In the edit mode, several stages are displayed from which the owner can pick one that is descriptive of the status of the initiative.
- **Investment:** this field captures the cost of or investment in each particular goal or initiative so the user can readily access financial information related to decision making and priorities.
- **Payback:** the payback field refers to the economic return anticipated for achievement of the particular goal or initiative. In conjunction with the investment field, the payback field can allow a ratio of return on investment to be produced, which ratio may play a key decision making role in an assessment of the relative value of one initiative versus another.
- **Rank:** this field is available for formulas developed for each client for calculating the ranking of each goal and initiative, including the combined values of initiatives contributing to a particular strategic goal.



Score: the score field relates to a unique calculation of the cumulative value of each goal and initiative based on weighting techniques appropriate to the user (e.g., alignment with corporate values, brand, payback, competitive position, management attitudes). Both the rank and score fields are provided to help users prioritize goals and initiatives in the portfolio.



Edit button: when a user clicks on the edit button, the user is taken immediately to the **Basic Goal Edit screen** (see Fig. 30) which allows the authorized owner to modify the basic information about the particular goal or initiative that has been selected. The Project Name and Description fields are for text, the Due Date is for calendar completion date information, and the other fields such as domain, status, benefit and risk priority, and stage present pop-up menus. When changes are submitted, the changes are automatically accessible to whomever uses the system and are captured in the history log.

- **Delegate button:** this button allows the user to designate or re-designate the individual who is the owner of the goal or initiative by going to the **Delegate Screen** (see Fig. 36A) and searching through names of candidates to whom responsibility can be delegated.
- **Delete button:** when this button is selected, the user is automatically asked whether the goal or initiative is to be deleted

and, if so, the goal or initiative is deleted and archived in case subsequent retrieval becomes necessary.

- **Project Menu:** this pop-up menu lists the choices of views the user can access from the Basic Goal Info Screen as regards the active goal or initiative that has been selected. The view choices include the following:

• **Control Panel:** when this choice is made the user is presented with the **Control Panel view** (see Fig. 29) and can review the permissioning rules. If the rules are satisfactory, the user can retreat and proceed along another path. If the rules need to be changed, the user clicks the edit button and is presented with another version of the **Control Panel** that can be edited and submitted. Only the authorized owner is able to make changes.

• **Project Briefing:** if the user wants to understand better how the active goal or initiative relates to the parent goal, the user can click on this choice and will be presented with the **Project Briefing screen** (see Fig. 37). Here salient information is displayed from the Objective field in the basic information related to the selected goal (see Fig. 38). In addition, sources of knowledge that may be helpful to access are listed so that the user can hot-link to them if need be. In a typical embodiment, this screen cannot be edited and is just a view.

• **Goal Components:** when the user makes this choice, the user is presented with a **Goal Components screen** (see Fig. 39) and, in a

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- **Select Parent:** when the user wants to change the position of an initiative in the hierarchy, the user clicks on this button and is taken to the **Select New Parent** screen (see Fig. 40). On this screen the user can either search for the new parent goal or initiative if the user knows its name, or click on "Select from Project Hierarchy" and be presented with another screen that lists the hierarchy. The user then selects a goal or initiative as the new parent, and when the user clicks on this selection, the original initiative is associated with the new parent and shows up so associated in the hierarchy.
- **Add SubProject:** when the user wants to add a new subordinate initiative with which the user is working, the user can use the "add" button to view **New Goal** screen (see Fig. 7) and enter information about the new initiative using the standard template. When the information is entered, the new initiative is placed appropriately in the hierarchy.
- **Add Milestone:** this button allows the user to flag and define major milestones in the initiative, which can be useful for adding more detail if appropriate for monitoring significant targets. The **Create Milestone** screen allows the user to name and define the milestone and to set a finish date and status.

5 **Project History:** this button takes the user to a display of **project history** (see Fig. 41) that shows when changes were made, from creation of the initiative to modifications to any of its attributes. This history can be very valuable for tracking key events in the life of a goal or initiative for analytic or other reasons. From this screen the user can also add comments to explain particular events, or add new events.

10 **Links:** this button takes the user to a view (see Fig. 35) of the links to any knowledge sources that the initiative team has chosen to put here so that the knowledge sources will be accessible to any members when necessary. An advantage of this facility is that with the domain structure linked to goals and initiatives and with knowledge linked to the goals and initiatives, the organization is provided with a clear and natural organization for placing and locating critical information when needed. From this
 15 screen the user can **add links** (see Fig. 34).

20 **Gaps Analysis:** this button takes the user to the list of contributing goals/projects (with actual and desired weightings) by domain - **screen** (see Fig. 13). From this list the user can determine whether the changes for each key domain have been identified. If the user is dissatisfied, the user can either select the edit button and change specific information about one or more of the existing contributing goals/projects or click on "Add" to get to the **Edit Contributing Goal screen** (see Fig. 7). In the latter case,

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the user can select a domain and enter the name of a new initiative, its actual achievement weighting (based on current status) and desired achievement weighting (based on the importance of this initiative to achieving the parent goal). When the new initiative idea is submitted, the software displays the Gap Analysis view with the new initiative added. The user can continue to add new contributing goals/projects by domain.

When the user is comfortable that the domains have been covered, the user can click on a listed goal name and proceed directly to its summary screen to begin to flesh out more information about its characteristics such as its owner and objective.

In at least some cases, the value of the Gap Analysis is substantial, because it allows users to brainstorm what changes in the domain structure need to be made if a particular goal or initiative is to be implemented successfully. In this regard, the combination of domain structure and gap analysis keeps members of the organization focused on how the organization works and where improvements need to be made for strategic or tactical reasons.

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a39 View Menu: the menu at the top of the **Goal Hierarchy** screen (see Fig. 42) give the user access to hierarchical views that

facilitate decision making related to creating the hierarchy itself, reviewing status, or flagging changes particularly interesting to the user. A description of each of the buttons is set forth in the following sections:

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- ~~cb~~ ~~640~~ **Select Domain:** When this is selected the domain structure screen is presented (see Fig. 24).

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- ~~cb~~ ~~641~~ **All Goals View:** when this button is clicked, the user is presented with screen (see Fig. 17) which repeats the hierarchy on the left and adds relevant information on the right in five categories useful to users when the users want to assess the validity of the current goal hierarchy, including cost, payback priority, domain, and due date (expressed as time remaining before expected completion). From this screen, the user can select other views where the hierarchy is sorted by category represented by the column heading, e.g., is sorted in descending order of costs, screen (see Fig. 17), thereby helping people decide whether the level of investment required can be afforded. Likewise, using column headings as buttons, the user can sort the hierarchy into various views according to **payback** (see Fig. 20), **priority** (see Fig. 20), **domain** (see Fig. 16), or **due date**. These views facilitate meetings and deliberations where users need to quickly produce a variety of sorted views to achieve the variety of perspectives needed to reach informed decisions. For example, a view sorted by payback, with cost information also visible, helps

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users decide whether the return on investment will be sufficient to justify financially.

Sorting by priority allows users to view the relative weightings that have been given to the goals and initiatives based on factors deemed important from a prioritization perspective. In a typical case, from a strategic perspective, the view sort by domain is highly desirable because this view shows how the goals and initiatives affect different aspects of the organization, e.g., from dealing with customers, to processes, organization, and economics. As a result, users can make common sense decisions about, for example, whether all the needed changes in all the domains have been accounted for.

- **Status View:** this button takes the user to various views of the portfolio sorted by information fields that indicate how well the goal or initiative is progressing. When the button is clicked, the **Projects by Status** screen (see Fig. 18) is presented, sorted by status categories and showing other column headings that can be clicked on to get **Projects by Stage** (see Fig. 21) or by **Owner**, **Projects by Risk**, and **Projects by Due Date**. Armed with these views, users can decide where to focus their attention to keep projects on track.

- **Alerts View:** this button takes the user to the **Project Alerts View** (see Fig. 27) which shows changes a particular user has identified as being of particular interest. From this view, the user

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can access the **Set Alerts** and **Set AlertsEdit** screens and modify the goals and types of changes the computer is to monitor and flag on the user's behalf.

- 5 In a typical embodiment, the Agile Manager is accessible from every desktop, with appropriate security clearances, for individual or team use on-line, with print out ability for manual use, and for electronic projection to facilitate team meetings. The software is flexible and is arranged to allow the user to make non-structural changes in, for
- 10 example, the specifics contained. The user changes the "base case" to reflect the desired language and sub-domain elements. As a result, the more the tool is used, the more the tool comes to reflect the user and the user tends to become proficient with the tool.
- 15 The technique (i.e., at least a portion of one or more of the procedures described above) may be implemented in hardware or software, or a combination of both. In some cases, it is advantageous if the method is implemented in computer programs executing on programmable computers that each include a processor, a storage medium readable by
- 20 the processor (including volatile and non-volatile memory and/or storage elements), at least one input device such as a keyboard, and at least one output device. Program code is applied to data entered using the input device to perform the procedure described above and to

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generate output information. The output information is applied to one or more output devices.

In some cases, it is advantageous if each program is implemented in a high level procedural or object-oriented programming language such as Microsoft C or C++ to communicate with a computer system. The programs can be implemented in assembly or machine language, if desired. In any case, the language may be a compiled or interpreted language.

In some cases, it is advantageous if each such computer program is stored on a storage medium or device (e.g., ROM or magnetic diskette) that is readable by a general or special purpose programmable computer for configuring and operating the computer when the storage medium or device is read by the computer to perform the procedures described in this document. The system may also be considered to be implemented as a computer-readable storage medium, configured with a computer program, where the storage medium so configured causes a computer to operate in a specific and predefined manner.